

## PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



June 27, 2013

Murry Wilson  
San Luis Obispo County  
Department of Planning and Building  
976 Osos Street, Room 300  
San Luis Obispo, CA 993408-2040

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)  
Las Pilitas Quarry CUP & Reclamation Plan SCH # 2010071013

Dear Mr. Wilson:

As the state agency responsible for rail safety within California, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC or Commission) recommends that development projects proposed near rail corridors be planned with the safety of these corridors in mind. New developments and improvements to existing facilities may increase vehicular traffic volumes, not only on streets and at intersections, but also at at-grade highway-rail crossings. In addition, projects may increase pedestrian traffic at crossings, and elsewhere along rail corridor rights-of-way. Working with Commission staff early in project planning will help project proponents, agency staff, and other reviewers to identify potential project impacts and appropriate mitigation measures, and thereby improve the safety of motorists, pedestrians, railroad personnel, and railroad passengers.

As noted in our comment letter to the Notice of Preparation (NOP) dated August 9, 2010, this project will have a significant impact to the Estrada Avenue/SR-58 at-grade railroad crossing (CPUC # 001E-231.80, DOT # 752018L). The Commission appreciates the inclusion of the 2009 Traffic Impact Study (TIS) in the DEIR. Below are Commission's comments to the DEIR.

- 1.) The Commission continues to support the signalization of El Camino Real/Estrada Avenue intersection. The current stop controlled configuration results in queuing onto the adjacent railroad crossing from this intersection. Additional traffic generated by this project may increase the potential for queuing at the rail crossing. Subsequent to the 2009 TIS, the California Manual on Uniform Control Devices (CAMUTCD) was updated, adding Warrant 9 for intersections near an at-grade railroad crossing. The DEIR does discuss signalization of the intersection. However, there is no mention of adding railroad preemption, which ties the traffic signals into the railroad automatic warning devices. The new traffic signals must be interconnected with the existing railroad automatic warning devices for the system as a whole to operate effectively. Adding preemption to the new signalized intersection will clear any vehicles queued at the crossing prior to train arrival.
- 2.) The Commission continues to recommend installation of raised concrete medians on both approaches to the railroad crossing to reduce gate drive around incidents.
- 3.) The Commission continues to recommend extending the existing lane guidance striping currently on the east approach through the crossing to help delineate the traveled roadway

through the crossing. The current striping stops just east of the crossing.

- 4.) The Commission continues to recommend adding bicycle lanes through the crossing to match the planned bicycle lane installation on El Camino Real as part of the Salinas River Area Plan and the Santa Margarita Design Plan. The crossing may be currently used by bicyclists traveling to the nearby elementary school. Adding bicycle lanes will aid bicyclists traveling over the bridge.

Items 2-4 were discussed in the TIS as being considered by the Salinas River Area Plan and Santa Margarita Design Plan. However, the TIS states these items are not being considered as mitigations for this project because the “improvements are not currently funded.” The Commission recommends each project contribute a fair share portion to fund each of the above referenced mitigation measures.

In general, the major types of impacts to consider are collisions between trains and vehicles, and between trains and pedestrians. The proposed project has the potential to increase vehicular and traffic in the vicinity.

Measures to reduce adverse impacts to rail safety need to be considered in the Traffic and Circulation section of the FEIR. General categories of such measures include:

- Installation of grade separations at crossings, i.e., physically separating roads and railroad track by constructing overpasses or underpasses
- Improvements to warning devices at existing highway-rail crossing
- Installation of additional warning signage
- Improvements to traffic signaling at intersections adjacent to crossings, e.g., traffic preemption
- Installation of median separation to prevent vehicles from driving around railroad crossing gates
- Prohibition of parking within 100 feet of crossings to improve the visibility of warning devices and approaching trains
- Installation of pedestrian-specific warning devices and channelization and sidewalks
- Construction of pull out lanes for buses and vehicles transporting hazardous materials
- Installation of vandal-resistant fencing or walls to limit the access of pedestrians onto the railroad right-of-way
- Elimination of driveways near crossings
- Increased enforcement of traffic laws at crossings
- Rail safety awareness programs to educate the public about the hazards of highway-rail grade crossings

Commission approval is required to modify an existing highway-rail crossing or to construct a new crossing. Completion and submittal of a General Order (GO) 88-B will be required for any proposed work to the crossing along with appropriate project environmental documents per CEQA. The proposed mitigation measure of installing traffic signals at the El Camino Real/Estrada Avenue intersection falls under the criteria requiring a GO 88-B. Information on filing a GO 88-B

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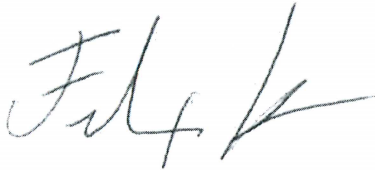
can be found on the Commission's website here:  
<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/PUC/safety/Rail/Crossings/go88b.htm>.

We recommend that a safety diagnostic be conducted with the CPUC, Railroad and County at this crossing to address the project related traffic impacts and applicable mitigation measures.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. We look forward to working with the County on this project.

Should you have any questions and to schedule the safety diagnostic, please contact me at (415) 703-3722 or email at [felix.ko@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:felix.ko@cpuc.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Felix Ko', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Felix Ko  
Utilities Engineer  
Safety and Enforcement Division  
Rail Crossings Engineering Section  
505 Van Ness Ave  
San Francisco, CA 94102